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Edited by  
**W. BENSON THORNE,**  
Bromley Library, 126 Brunswick Road, E.



**AUGUST, 1903.**  
**VOL. III. No. 23.**

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**No. 68.**

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# The Library Assistant:

*The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.*

No. 68.

AUGUST, 1903.

Published Monthly

## COTGREAVE PRIZE (1903).

Members are finally reminded that Tuesday, August 18th, is the last day for receipt of essays. It is hoped that a good number will be forthcoming.

## PROPOSED L.A.A. PICNIC.

The Committee have considered the suggestion that a picnic be organized, and have decided that such an outing shall be arranged for Wednesday, September 16th, at Burnham Beeches, providing that sufficient support is evidenced.

All members who propose to avail themselves of this suggestion are asked to communicate with Mr. W. B. Young, Public Library, Leyton, on or before August 18th, stating the number of friends they propose bringing with them.

## NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH—SUMMER MEETING.

The Summer Meeting of the N.W. Branch was held at Chorley on July 11th, by the kind invitation of Mr. E. McKnight.

On reaching Chorley the small party from Manchester proceeded to the Library under the direction of Mr. McKnight, and there met a few more who had availed themselves of the opportunity to visit Chorley. After spending a short time in inspecting the library, newsrooms, etc., with Mr. McKnight as guide, a hurried departure was made in order to catch the train for Adlington. From there, after a ramble of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, Rivington was reached, and the Rev. S. Thompson was waiting to conduct the party round the old Unitarian Chapel, built early in 1700, and standing to-day as then, not having had any structural or interior alterations.

An adjournment was next made to a neighbouring hostelry, where tea had been prepared by the kind hospitality of Mr. McKnight, after partaking of which, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to both the Rev. S. Thompson, for so kindly showing the members over the Chapel and his gardens, and to Mr. McKnight for his kind hospitality and the splendid arrangements made.

The rest of the time was devoted to rambling through Dean Woods, and making the return to Adlington and Chorley, when the rain which had long been threatening began to fall in earnest.

## LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS.

By P. EVANS LEWIN.

In spite of the recent development of libraries, it is surprising to find that, with a few brilliant exceptions, there has been no corresponding advance in the movement for forming local museums. It is so obvious and so generally admitted that a museum is the natural adjunct of every public library that it would be thought that no library would be so poor in spirit, as I shall presently demonstrate, as to be without one. Yet the fact remains that very few of our rate-supported libraries contain any collection of antiquities or natural objects worthy of the name of museum; and the majority of our local collections are so full of objects of the curiosity type, such as the shoe-horn used by (say) Lord Nelson's grandfather, or a lock of hair of some long-forgotten murderer, objects interesting from the sentimental point of view only, that their educational influence is practically *nil*. The public spirit which was aroused in many of our country towns in the early forties and fifties, when the Literary and Scientific Institutions and Working Men's Institutes were in full swing, has been allowed to become dormant, and the valuable collections then formed have in many cases been dispersed, or are hidden away in lumber rooms. I have in mind one most flagrant example—a unique collection being sold for an old song, for "want of space"! It is only of comparatively recent date that a feeling has been abroad that whilst libraries are a luxury, museums are a necessity. From the time of the libraries at Alexandria and Pergamos to the present day, the museum has been an adjunct of the library—and rightly so. The mind of man is not first awakened by a perusal of Aristotle, or the metaphysical subtleties of Plato, but by a personal observation of his natural surroundings; and what can be better than to turn from our own investigation of nature to the thoughts and opinions of those who have observed before us—the right course being from the natural object to the book. In the country the observation of nature is comparatively easy—the fields are the student's observatory—though even here museums are desiderata; but in our larger towns the case is entirely different. It is here that our busy workers feel the real need of a museum, and it is in too many cases the apathy, to a great extent, of the local bodies, accompanied by a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the librarian, which have deprived them of what should be their natural heritage. Almost invariably one meets with two excuses: lack of funds and want of space. The former is no excuse at all, and the latter is generally due to a deficiency in foresight on the part of the committee responsible for the building of the library.

A good local antiquarian and natural collection can be formed almost entirely by the efforts of the librarian, helped by those enthusiasts of whom there are many in any town only too ready to lend their aid, who are members of the local field and antiquarian societies. Save perhaps for the cost of the cases and some few other initial expenses, such a museum as I shall outline can be formed practically without recourse to the public rates. The first essential of such a collection is, then, that it shall be thoroughly representative, not only of the history, the geology, botany, and fauna, but of the industries and social life of the district. Such a collection itself would be an invaluable help to the student. But it should aim to be something more. From the district to the world at large may appear to be a long step, but in reality a collection representative of the social and political history, geography, and natural life of the many different countries can be gathered together, perhaps with considerable trouble, but with very little expense. Such a collection need include no expensive works of

art—these will come, no doubt in time—for expense is not a criterion of usefulness or merit, and many of the objects which it should contain can be had as a rule for the asking.

Firstly, then, the museum is to be of a local character, and its nature will, of course, largely depend upon the features of the surrounding district. If we start from natural history in its popular sense, we shall at once find that three broad principles must be laid down for our guidance. The leading principle is that objects should be displayed so as to convey as full an idea as possible of the haunts and habits of the creatures shown and of the circumstances under which they pass their lives. This naturally applies mainly to quadrupeds, birds and higher organisms. It is painful sometimes to go into a museum and find a stuffed bird perched upon a wooden stick in a glass case labelled "Sparrow," or possibly only "Pyrgita Domestica." If he be a sparrow where is his partner? what is she like? where are her eggs? and what is his home like? These and similar questions should be answered by the exhibit itself, if it is to be of any real educational value. It is not enough to set up a stuffed bird or beast. The second principle is that specimens should be displayed with others of the same family or genus, and this will apply more especially to the shells and lower organisms. And here there should be no break between the past and the present, the natural principle of evolution shows that; and therefore I conceive it to be essential that specimens of the same genus, whether now living or extinct, should be exhibited together. Then we shall find abundant exercise for our minds in attempting to discover why one family perished so soon whilst another, apparently weaker, lasts so long. The third great principle, and a duty which is too often overlooked or perfunctorily performed, is that full and adequate descriptions should accompany every exhibit, not only demonstrating class and habits, but referring the student to all passages in books in the library dealing with the object displayed. Failing this the exhibit is often meaningless to the average visitor. Here is an opportunity for the librarian and his assistants to become personally acquainted with the contents of the books under their charge. It is too much to expect every librarian to be a scientist, but he can at least point the way. With the botanical collections the same principles, to a great extent, can be observed. The aid of the expert will always be a necessity, but the librarian often reaps where others have sown, and much of the praise becomes his inheritance.

After the local natural section comes the historical department, showing, of course, in an orderly progression, the social and political life of the district. Here the librarian will perhaps be more at home, for one of his first duties will have been to enter somewhat fully into the past history of his town. This section will be mainly devoted to maps, plans, prints, election squibs and addresses, and photographs of the district, and I would even plead for the ubiquitous pictorial postcard. Many of these are in a short time out of print, and the scenes they have represented no longer exist. Pedigrees of important families can also be displayed with advantage. Lastly, on the local side, comes the industrial section. This should perhaps be made the *pièce de résistance*. Every district has some industry more prominently represented than the others, and all the numerous processes carried on in that industry should not only be fully demonstrated, but—and this is a thing seldom or never attempted—the social surroundings and life, both business and home, of the workers should be shown in the best way possible, by photographs, newspaper cuttings and tabulated statements. The social side of the museum would be invaluable to the local politician, and such an exhibit could be made, I believe, intensely interesting.

Thus far the local museum. The other is far more difficult to deal

with. What to include and what to reject will be of paramount importance. It would never do to accept everything that comes along, simply because it is given. I believe that the main principle to be followed is not so much to form a systematic museum representative of the whole world, but a museum suitable for the instruction of the young. The real student would not wander into our small typical museums for his mental pabulum; he would rather attend some of our national treasure houses. How rare a bird he is can be ascertained by a visit to any of the large London Museums, the Soane, the Royal Architectural Museum, the United Service Institution, the half-dozen subsidiary collections at South Kensington, or even—but this is treason—the British Museum itself. In most of these the solitary curator regards a visitor as a find. In our wider collection we do not seek the student, then. This museum should be for the man-in-the-street. There is one section which can be available for everyone—and that is the art section. There is no excuse for the library which does not purchase liberally all the reproductions of the great pictures of the world. These are now so cheap and plentiful, and withal so good that it is a shameful neglect not to buy them. Want of space is here no excuse, for a fresh show could be made every day. And under the heading "Art" I would include, not only these reproductions, but also postage stamps, coins which are invaluable in long series, especially those at present current, which could easily be obtained, for every tourist returns with some; photographs of foreign places and peoples, and especially the many series of costume postcards; and photographs or prints of the sovereigns and leading men of all nations, authors, scientists, politicians, warriors and what not, accompanied by a short written biography in each case. This would be no dry-as-dust collection, but a living embodiment of the present world. A veritable mine of information is here ready to hand, and at little cost. It is almost incredible that these things should be allowed to remain in shop windows only. If anything happen in a particular country, then our collection of postcards should be to the fore. If a celebrated man die our portrait and biography are available. If there be a political crisis we have our collection of photographs of cabinet ministers. The thing may appear trivial, but I am convinced that its educational importance is immense.

If the library be rich in typographical curiosities or books of bibliographical interest, as sometimes happens even in the rate-supported library, a very interesting exhibit can be formed, showing the progress of printing—and this section can always be supplemented by the many fac-similes which are now available.

Then finally our small museum should have Roman and Greek remains or replicas, typical curiosities of all countries, especially adapted for the instruction of the young, and, in fact, anything which can throw any light upon the manners and customs of other peoples. All this can surely be done without any addition to the rates. If the Museums Act be adopted so much the better, but until this be done, much can be accomplished with the help of experts and students. If the library is to be, as it often claims to be, the intellectual centre of the district, it must do something more than it is now doing. It must be awake to the changing ideas of the times, and from its present condition of intellectual somnolence, become the meeting place, not only of reading circles, University Extension Classes, and Browning Societies, but of the natural history and antiquarian clubs of the district. The library is no longer a place for the storage of books only, and it never has been. That was only the mistaken mediæval unlovely idea of its functions. Nor is it a school or university. It should be a centre of information and mental recreation, open to all who care to enter. This is easy of achievement. The one thing lacking is enthusiasm.



### THE COMMITTEE.

The inaugural meeting of the Committee was held at Headquarters on July 22nd. Present: Mr. Rees (in chair), Messrs. Bullen, Chambers, Faraday, Hatcher, Lewin, Philip, Rivers, Savage, Stevenson, Young and Roebuck. Mr. Hatcher was elected Vice-Chairman. The constitution of the Sub-Committees was discussed and the following elections made:

#### **Publications Sub-Committee—**

The Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Editor (Mr. Thorne), Hon. Sec. N.W. Branch, Messrs. Hatcher, Lewin, Philip and Rivers.

#### **Education Sub-Committee—**

The Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Messrs. Bullen, Savage and Thorne.

#### **Branches Sub-Committee—**

Hon. Sec. (General and N.W. Branch), Messrs. Harris, Hatcher and Hogg.

#### **Entertainments Sub-Committee—**

Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Messrs. Bradley, P. H. Wood and Young.

The programme of meetings, etc., for the Ninth Session will appear in our next issue.

### APPOINTMENTS.

BRIARS, Mr. G. C., of Stockport, to be an Assistant at the York Public Library.

\*BUDDERY, Mr. E. E., of West Ham, to be Librarian of the new Public Library, Chatham.

\*BURT, Mr. A. G., of Fulham, to be Chief Librarian of the Public Libraries, Handsworth.

\*NORRIE, Mr. J., of Walthamstow, to be District Librarian of the Kingston Public Library, Glasgow.

\*POULTER, Mr. H. W., of Stepney, to be Assistant Librarian of the Walthamstow Public Library.

TAYLOR, Mr. P., of York, to be Librarian of the Public Library, Barnsley.

\*Members of the L.A.A.

### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

**Carnegie Gifts.**—The following are such of the donations Mr. Carnegie has distributed during the past month as we have been able to discover from various sources, viz.:

Brighton	...	£10,000	Leyton	...	£8,000
Calne	...	£1,200	Ramsey, Isle of Man		
Hackney	...	£25,000	Southend-on-Sea		£8,000
Hemel Hempstead		£3,000	Torquay	...	£7,500
Hove	...	£10,000	Whitehaven	...	£5,000

We do not know what amount has been offered to Ramsey, but understand it runs into four figures. The offer was made through Mr. Hall Caine, and one of the conditions is that Mr. Caine shall present a site. The claims of other communities in the Island Mr. Carnegie has also promised to consider. The Town Council of Torquay has decided to adopt the Acts in order to avail itself of the offer. The gift to Leyton is for the establishment of branches.

**Westminster.**—The Westminster City Council have accepted the offer of Mr. J. Passmore Edwards to place a marble bust of the late William Ewart, M.P., in the Great Smith Street Public Library.

The United parishes of St. Margaret and St. John (Old Westminster) were foremost in adopting the Libraries Act of 1855. The Library for this district, in Great Smith Street, was opened in 1857 (the new building in 1893), and was the only public Library in London under the Act until the Wandsworth Library was opened in 1885.

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#### NEW BOOKS, ETC.

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**Manual of Library Economy.** By JAMES DUFF BROWN. Demy 8vo. xii., & 475 pp. Illus. (Scott, Greenwood & Co.—7s. 6d. net). Contents :—Foundations and Committees. Staff. Buildings. Fittings and Furniture. Book Selection and Accession. Classification and Shelf Arrangement. Cataloguing, Indexing, Filing. Maintenance and Routine Work. Public Service. Index.

Since we first saw this book announced we have looked forward with no little interest to its perusal, and with the names of Mr. J. D. Brown as author and Messrs. Scott, Greenwood & Co. as publishers, we naturally anticipated a volume which would be at once valuable and authoritative. Without more ado, we may say that we have not been disappointed; it is an admirable book, and author and publishers alike deserve all praise for its production. The idea of the author is to provide "a text-book of advanced library practice," and with the possible exception of Mr. Macfarlane's "Library Administration," his claim to have brought out the first work in English to treat of modern library economy in a comprehensive manner is justified. In the preface, and all through the book, Mr. Brown bewails the limitation of the rate. He says that while the public libraries of France and the United States are hampered by conservatism and uniformity, those of Great Britain are paralysed by the fixed rate. Of course in the brief space at our disposal it is impossible to deal with every subject the book treats on, and equally, of course, it would have been impossible for Mr. Brown to have written such a book as this and at the same time to have written it to the liking of every librarian. Doubtless he will find many ready to rise up and dispute or argue almost every statement he makes, but nevertheless, we contend that Mr. Brown has treated most things he writes about with a commendable impartiality.

although here and there, where experience has taught him that such and such methods are the best, he has expressed himself in bold and vigorous language.

In the section dealing with the Staff a table of librarians' salaries, graduated according to the library income, is given, which, while they *may* cause some mouths to water, are remarkably fair and carefully worked out. Mr. Brown deals very fairly and liberally with assistants. He advocates an examination in general knowledge before appointing juniors, saying, "Nothing is more exasperating to intending readers than to be served by some youth who is ignorant of the most elementary subjects in general knowledge." Passing on to the appointment of seniors, the author says, "Examinations are held by the Library Association, . . . but they are not suitable for the purpose of aiding selection for first appointments. But any candidate . . . who possesses one of the L.A. Certificates should be selected for interview as a matter of course." Attendance at the classes to prepare for these exams is urged, and librarians are advised to encourage their assistants in this. Payment of their fees is also recommended. Mr. Brown puts in a good word for the L.A.A., which, he says, all assistants would do well in supporting. A useful list of books for the librarian's library is given, while at the end of each chapter a list of authorities is appended, which is of service to those who would wish to study the matter further. As might be expected, the book holds a brief for "Open access," but little or nothing new is said upon the subject. All that appears is quoted from a well-remembered pamphlet issued in 1899 "by the librarians in charge of open-access libraries." Even in this, however, Mr. Brown is not unfair, for he quotes freely from a paper, which he says is the best he has seen, written by Mr. W. E. Doubleday for the "Library" (New Series), opposing the system and bringing to light its weak points.

A good index is provided, and there is hardly an item of ordinary public library work on which the book may not be profitably consulted. It must at once become the standard text-book on the subject of British Public Library Economy, not because it is the *only* book as yet, but because of its value and practicability. We trust that every librarian will add one or two copies to his shelves, as the price makes it difficult for the average junior assistant to acquire, but at the same time we recommend every assistant to procure a copy for his own individual use if he can. We venture to give expression to our feeling, however, that there is still room for an elementary manual of British library methods, suitable for placing in the hands of juniors, to be published at about eighteen-pence.

Two notes in the book rather interest us, one—that any profits arising from its sale will be handed over to the Library Association, and two—Mr. Jast, of Croydon, has in preparation a work on the whole theory, practice and philosophy of public access to the shelves.

#### Battersea Public Libraries: Sixteenth Annual Report, 1902-1903. (LAWRENCE INKSTER, Chief Librarian).

Shows a good year's work in increased issues and books added to the stock. Unfortunately the £15,000 presented by Mr. Carnegie in 1902 cannot at present be made use of, as the rate limit will not allow it. When an increased income is possible, three new branches, a reading room and books for the blind, free lectures, additional reading rooms for children and an improved scale of salaries for the staff are needed. We hope the rate limit will soon be removed!

Kimberley Public Library : Rules and Bye-Laws. (B. L. DYER, Librarian).

We notice sixpence is charged for this leaflet of eight pages ! How many borrowers would pay that amount for a copy of the rules over here ?

Kimberley Public Library : The Library Record, May, 1903.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Public Libraries : Catalogue of books on the useful arts in the Central Library. Compiled by BASIL ANDERTON, B.A., Librarian. Royal 8vo. pp. 287. 1903.

An elaborate catalogue of the books in Class 600 of Dewey's Decimal Classification, divided into three parts, viz.:—Author List, Anonymous Works and Periodicals, Subject List. We cannot help but feel this to be a very useful piece of work, useful not only to the borrowers from the library, but also as a guide to future compilers of catalogues or lists on the Dewey system. As it is said in the Preface, it is not essential that readers should trouble to master the classification, a free use of the index will obviate that, and they will reap the unquestionable advantage of having books they knew not of being brought under their immediate notice. We do not venture any criticism, but congratulate the compilers on their handiwork.

Stoke Newington Public Libraries : Thirteenth Annual Report, 1902-3. (GEORGE PREECE, Chief Librarian).

Reports an increase of over 8,000 in the year's issues and an addition of 1,920 vols. to the stock. Ten books have been stolen from among the works which are placed in the Reference Library for unrestricted use by readers, which fact will doubtless delight the hearts of the "anti-open-access party."

Westminster Public Libraries : Report of the Public Libraries Committee, 1902-3.

This is a composite report, prefaced by a few remarks by the Chairman of the Committee. Each Librarian—Mr. Pacy, Mr. Poole and Mr. Mason—then give independently an account of what has been done in their respective libraries during the year. Progress in each library is reported, and the figures—both in finance and attendance—are larger than one usually meets in annual reports.

#### NOTICES.

All matter for September Journal should be sent to the Hon. Editor before August 19th.

All other communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. G. E. Roebuck, PUBLIC LIBRARY, 236, CABLE STREET, E.





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Being a reprint (with addenda) of a paper read at the first Congress of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Cape Town, April-May, 1903.

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Copies may be had from the **Author**, or from **Mr. W. G. Chambers**, Public Library, Woolwich, S.E.

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*Chief Librarian and Clerk to the Commissioners.*

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**PARTICULARS, PRICES, AND SAMPLES ON APPLICATION.**

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